

HEALTH
ASSURED
20

LIBRARY

THE

Annual Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER

OF HEALTH

FOR THE


Urban District of Northam

IN DEVON

For the year 1942.

J. EDMUND FRANCIS, M.O.H.

BIDEFORD :
Printed by PEARSE & SON, Allhalland Street.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b29917402>

ANNUAL REPORT, 1942.

1—Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

AREA—4391 Acres.

POPULATION—Estimated resident, 6886.

Number of inhabited houses at end of 1942, according to the rate books, 2029.

Rateable value, £34,839.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £140.

Social and Physical Conditions.

The District is divided into four wards for the purpose of election to the Urban Council.

Appledore has shipbuilding and repairing yards, which employ a large number of hands, and is a favourite sea fishing centre. Northam, Westward Ho! and Orchard Hill wards are chiefly residential; Westward Ho! being a popular seaside resort.

The well-known championship links of the Royal North Devon Golf Club are situated on Northam Burrows, and attract a large number of visitors during the year.

Under the name of Kipling Tors, a hillside overlooking Bideford Bay and situated in the south-western area of Westward Ho! has recently been purchased as part of a Kipling Memorial and handed over to the National Trust. This land is about 18 acres in extent, and is a welcome addition to the free beauties of the district.

2—Vital Statistics for 1942.

Births and Birth Rate.

The total of live births in the District was 93, of which 42 were boys and 51 girls. Five boys and five girls were illegitimate.

There were 4 still births registered (2 boys and 2 girls). All of these were legitimate.

The live birth rate per 1000 of the population was 13·5, that for England and Wales being 15·8.

The still birth rate per 1000 was ·57, that for England and Wales ·54.

Deaths and Death Rate.

The total deaths were 101 (37 males and 64 females) but 52 of these were 70 years of age or over.

The death rate per 1000 of the population was 14·6, that for England and Wales being 11·6.

There were 4 deaths of infants under 1 year; one of these was illegitimate.

*The following Table gives the causes of death
in the District during 1942.*

CAUSES	MALES	FEMALES
Cancer	4	12
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	4	5
Heart Disease	13	26
Other Circulatory Diseases	2	
Bronchitis	1	1
Pneumonia		1
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	1	2
Other Tuberculosis		2
Influenza	1	1
Diabetes		1
Nephritis	2	4
Digestive Diseases	1	
Childbirth		1
Infantile Diseases	1	3
Road Deaths	1	
Other Violent Deaths	2	2
All other causes	4	3
Total ...	37	64

There were no deaths from Measles, Whooping Cough, or from Diarrhœa in children under 2 years of age.

3—General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

(1) Public Health Officers of the Authority.

There are three Public Health Officers for the Council—the Medical Officer of Health, the Sanitary Inspector, and the duties of Water Inspector are in the hands of the Council's Surveyor.

(2) Nursing Arrangements in Area.

There are two Voluntary Nursing Associations in the District, one for Northam, Westward Ho! and Orchard Hill, the other for Appledore. Both Associations employ fully qualified nurses, who also act as midwives.

(3) *Hospitals.*

The District is provided for by the Bideford & District Hospital, which is supported partly by voluntary contributions and partly by patients' fees. The Hospital is available for Medical and Surgical cases and contains about 40 beds.

The Isolation Hospital, situated at East-the-Water, Bideford, provides for infectious cases from the whole of North Devon, and was completed in 1935.

(4) *Ambulances.*

There are now in Bideford an up-to-date Motor Ambulance for Bideford and District for non-infectious cases, and an Ambulance in connection with, and kept at, the Isolation Hospital.

(5) *Clinics and Treatment Centres.*

A treatment centre for Venereal Diseases and a Tuberculosis Dispensary are available at Barnstaple for Northam District. Tubercular patients are admitted at Hawley and Hawkmoor Sanatoria.

4—Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

Northam Water Supply.

The water supply is derived from a reservoir draining a large tract of moorland at Melbury, situated in Parkham parish, and about nine miles from Northam. A scheme to increase the capacity of the reservoir was completed in 1942, adding another 10 million gallons to the former storage capacity of about 30 millions. Owing to the numerous visitors, including evacuees and military in the District, the public are earnestly requested to abstain from waste and to see that leaking taps are repaired as soon as possible.

A periodic analysis, both chemical and bacteriological, of the water is taken annually as a routine. An analysis of the water taken in August, 1942, is reported as being of a satisfactory standard of bacteriological and chemical purity.

Rainfall for 1942.

The total rainfall for 1942 was 48·41 inches, compared with 44·84 inches in 1941 and 38·39 inches in one of the driest years, 1921. The highest rainfall was 6·44 in January and the lowest ·26 inches in June.

These figures were taken at Melbury Water Works (which are about 500 feet above sea level), and are considerably higher than those taken at the Royal North Devon Golf Club at sea level, where 28·38 inches only were registered during the year.

Drainage and Sewerage.

The only river affected by sewage is tidal. There is, however, a small stream polluted by sewage water running through the south-west area of Northam District and draining a laundry and over a dozen residences. This stream is now, since the alteration of boundaries, under the control of the Northam Council. Endeavours are still being made to remedy the nuisance by trenching, but sooner or later a £2000 piping scheme may have to be carried out if the present scheme is not satisfactory.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

(a) During the year the Sanitary Inspector made numerous inspections of a sanitary nature. Complaints of nuisances were all remedied after serving of informal notices.

(b) There are 5 Elementary Schools in the District. All were inspected and found to be in a satisfactory condition.

5—Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Milk Supply.

There are 17 dairymen registered in the District, 16 of these producers and one retail only. 73 samples of milk were taken for examination; some of these failed as regards the Methylene Blue test, but further samples taken in these cases were satisfactory.

Bakehouses.

There are 6 Bakehouses in the District. All were inspected and found satisfactory.

Slaughterhouses.

All Slaughtering is at present carried out at the Public Abattoir in Bideford.

6—Housing

One hundred and fifty-three inspections of houses were made during the year under the Public Health or Housing Acts. There was no action taken under statutory powers during the year.

Number of New Houses built during the year.

Ten new houses were built, all by private effort.

7—Prevention of and control over Infectious Diseases.

During the year 4 cases each of Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough, and one each of Measles, Pneumonia and Puerperal Pyrexia were notified. The Scarlet Fever cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital.

The cleansing and disinfection of infected rooms is carried out personally by the Sanitary Inspector, and in cases where the bedding of necessitous cases has to be destroyed, the Council gives reasonable compensation.

Diphtheria Antitoxin is supplied free by the Council in necessitous cases.

During the year, 181 children were immunized against Diphtheria at the Schools in the District. This does not include numbers of children treated privately.

Tuberculosis

New Cases and Mortality in the District during 1942.

Age	NEW CASES				DEATHS	
	Respiratory		Non-respiratory			
	M	F	M	F	M	F
2				1		1
16-22	1	3		2		1
26-48	3					2
82	1				1	
Total	5	3		3	1	4

No action was taken during the year under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, or under Section 62 of the Public Health Act, 1935, or under Section 172 of the Public Health Act, 1936.

